



Legislators Call Governor's Higher Education Deal A Bad Deal For Good Students

At a press conference held on Wednesday, May 26th, flanked by students who were denied admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) under Governor Schwarzenegger's budget proposal, their parents and faculty members, Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas decried the deal as unfair to hardworking students and detrimental to California's economy. The press conference was a part of the UC Lobby Day, in which students, alumni and faculty come to Sacramento to encourage support for the UC system.

"California's future economic growth and competitiveness depend on a well-trained and well-educated workforce," said the Assemblyman, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy. "One of the reasons California is the sixth largest economy in the world is because of investment in the state's world class system of higher education, a system which affords low and middle class students the opportunity to achieve a college education and therefore, a better standard of life. If we are to retain that position and maintain the state's promise to afford all qualified students access to higher education, the Governor needs to rethink his proposal."

The California Master Plan for Higher Education was originally adopted by the Legislature in 1960. The Master Plan has been periodically updated, with the most recent update being the 2002 California Master Plan for Education which reaffirms the State's commitment to the access, affordability, equity and quality.

This is the first time in history that California's universities will break the educational promise made to hard working students and will turn away eligible freshman. To be eligible for admission to the CSU and



Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas and Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez address prospective UC students, their parents, alumni and the public on the negative consequences of the Governor's proposed UC and CSU budget cuts on enrollment, outreach and the California economy.

UC systems, high school students must be in the top one-third or one-eighth of their class respectively. Under the Governor's proposal, students who met the admissions criteria would be given deferred admission in their junior year provided they complete their associate degrees at a California Community College. Very few have accepted deferred admission, instead opting to attend private colleges or leaving California to enroll in other states.

"The legislative budget sub-committees have included funding that will allow every eligible student to attend a State university and my colleagues and I have provided sufficient financial aide to ensure that the State's colleges and universities remain accessible to every qualified student who wants to attend," said Ridley-Thomas. "The CSU and UC systems are clearly among California's

most important assets and it is our desire to demonstrate the Governor Schwarzenegger and the public that the Legislature intends to protect funding for them and the California's other treasures –our children."

In addition to capping enrollment, the cuts proposed by Governor Schwarzenegger, UC President Dynes and CSU Chancellor Reed will have devastating effects on the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP), Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement program (MESA) and Puente Program with helping to build a college-going culture among low- and middle-income Californians. Here are some noteworthy facts to consider:

- EAOP graduates enrolled in California public higher educational institutions – particularly California public universities – at a higher rate than their classmates statewide. For example, 19% of EAOP high school graduates go on to attend UC as opposed to 8% of the total number of California high school graduates. And 18% of EAOP high school graduates enroll in CSU compared to only 10.7% of all California high school graduates.
- Over 35% of EAOP students in 2002 were eligible to attend UC – more than three times the statewide rate.
- MESA graduates enrolled in higher educational institutions – especially California public universities – at a higher rate than did their counterparts statewide, 71% compared to 55%, respectively.
- A significant percentage of MESA graduates chose to declare college majors in math, science, or engineering.
- Puente graduates passed the High School Exit Examination, attained eligibility for the University of California, and enrolled in baccalaureate-granting institutions at rates higher than did students statewide.

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- Also, 83% of Puente's graduates attended a higher educational institution upon high school graduation as contrasted to 55% of their classmates statewide.
- Puente students attended baccalaureate-granting educational institutions at a higher rate than their statewide coun-

terparts, 43% to 21%, respectively.

Moreover, the proposed cuts will greatly impact new and existing students at all of California's Community College campuses, which number 109 statewide. The Governor's proposal seeks to increase fees, decrease the number of course offerings and will effectively squeeze out community college students to accommodate the displaced UC and CSU students. This action is a clear departure from the California Master

Plan for Higher Education and has serious implications for California's workforce as the community colleges provide vocational and technical certification for many industries.

The budget conference committees have begun to reconcile differences in the budgets passed by the Senate and Assembly. They will meet over the next couple weeks to craft a budget that must be passed by the full legislature by June 15th.



Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas welcomes Gwendolyn Crane and Tom Keyser to the Chambers of the California State Assembly where he presented a "Salute to Small Business Award" to Keyser Towing.

At the California Small Business Association Luncheon held at the Sacramento Convention Center on Wednesday, May 26th, Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) honored

Ridley-Thomas Announces Availability Of \$2 Million in Educational Grants For Teachers

Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D - Los Angeles) announced the availability of "A+ for Energy" grants administered by BP, Inc. to recognize California teachers for excellence in teaching energy education and/or energy conservation in the classroom.

"Energy conservation is of vital importance to the future of the state of Califor-

Ridley-Thomas Honors Keyser Towing at "Salute to Small Business" Event

nia," said the Assemblyman. "So too are our children. Teachers that have the vision to engage our children in discussions regarding critical issues such as conservation should be applauded. Because of their work and dedication, schools will be sending forth a new generation of pupils and citizens that are conscious of and committed to conservation."

Keyser Towing has been in business for over 30 years, serving customers in South Los Angeles," said Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas. "This business has been operated successfully by Tom Keyser and his son Korey with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity."

Keyser Towing is the only black-owned business of its kind west of the Mississippi. This small business provides towing and storage services, has 30 employees and has been

the contractor for the Los Angeles Police Department's 77th Division's Official Police Garage. It has held the contract with the area's official police garage since 1968.

The awards luncheon was a part of a daylong event in which small business and government joined together in a "A Salute to Small Business." Over 50 small businesses throughout California were recognized for their contributions to the state's economy and the event concluded with a dialogue between government agencies, small business liaisons and small business leaders.

BP will award up to \$2 million in grants to K-12 California teachers for innovative classroom, after-school, extra-curricular or summer activities focused on energy education and/or energy conservation. Grants will be awarded directly to teachers; grant amounts will equal \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on the budgets submitted by the teachers in the

application. Applications are available via the Internet at www.aplusforenergy.com and must be submitted by June 30, 2004.

Winning teachers will also receive a National Energy Education Development (NEED) scholarship to attend a five-day energy training conference in Long Beach in July 2005. BP is proud to partner with NEED to support energy education in California. The all-inclusive NEED scholarship will cover travel, meals and lodging expenses in addition to a NEED Science of Energy Kit valued at \$500 that includes helpful classroom tools and materials to help educators teach energy issues.

For additional information, call BP at (714) 228-6760.



Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas, Councilwoman Jan Perry and Mayor James Hahn honored Ray Charles for his musical contributions on February 6th at the California African American Museum.

Ridley-Thomas Statement on the Death of Ray Charles

Upon learning of the death of the music legend Ray Charles, Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) offered the following remarks.

"I am deeply saddened to learn of passing of Ray Charles as his death is an enormous loss for his family, fans and the entire world," said Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas. "He was an incredibly talented individual who overcame blindness, poverty, discrimination and drug addiction to become one of the most legendary entertainers in music history. I am grateful for his support

over the years and am humbled that I had the privilege to honor him in life at the California African American Museum earlier this year. I am equally pleased that he was able to witness the City of Los Angeles designate his recording studio, which is located in the 48th Assembly District, as a national landmark. Although he is no longer with us, Ray Charles' spirit will continue on through his music. My most heartfelt prayers and condolences go out to his family - may they be comforted by the fact that his music touched so many."